

**Amendments to the claims:**

This listing of claims replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method of treatment of malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract comprising: ~~diagnosis of a malabsorptive~~ diagnosing a malabsorptive condition of the gastrointestinal tract in a patient, and administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with a therapeutically effective amount of artichoke leaf extract.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the malabsorptive conditions of the gastrointestinal tract are selected from the group consisting of celiac disease, tropical sprue, Whipple's disease, bacterial overgrowth, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, allergic gastroenteritis, lymphoma-associated diffuse enteritis and acute infectious enteritis.
3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25 mg/kg of body weight of the patient.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutically effective amount of artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.
5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.
6. (currently amended) A method of treating celiac disease comprising: diagnosing a patient with celiac disease, and administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with a therapeutic amount of artichoke leaf extract.
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25 mg/kg of body weight of the patient.
8. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the therapeutically effective amount of artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.

10. (currently amended) A method of ~~prevention of~~ treating complications associated with malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract consisting of: ~~diagnosis of~~ diagnosing complications associated with malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract in a patient, and administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with artichoke leaf extract.

11. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 10, wherein the malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract are selected from the group consisting of celiac disease, tropical sprue, Whipple's disease, bacterial overgrowth, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, allergic gastroenteritis, lymphoma-associated diffuse enteritis and acute infectious enteritis.

12. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 10, wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25 mg/kg of body weight of the patient.

13. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 10, wherein the artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.

14. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 10, wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.

15. (currently amended) A method of ~~preventing~~ treating complications related to celiac disease comprising: diagnosing a patient with celiac disease, and administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with a therapeutic amount of artichoke leaf extract.

16. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 15, wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25 mg/kg of body weight of the patient.

17. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 15, wherein the artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.

18. (currently amended) The method of ~~prevention of~~ claim 15, wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.

19. (currently amended) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of ~~malabsorption~~  
~~malabsorptive~~ conditions comprising  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with at least one derivatives of  $\alpha$ -MSH and  
artichoke leaf extract.

20. (currently amended) The composition of claim 19, wherein the  $\alpha$ -MSH is at least about 25  
mg/kg of a recipient's body weight.

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) The composition of claim ~~21~~20, wherein the derivative of  $\alpha$ -MSH is  
VPKCCKPV (SEQ ID NO: 5).

23. (currently amended) The composition of claim 20, wherein the artichoke leaf extract is at least  
about 300 to 1000 mgs.